



MORRIS H. PARRISH
MAYOR

November 19, 1997

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Mr. William Kennard
Chairman Designate
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Ex Parte Letter Re: Cases WT-97-197 MM Docket 97-182, and DA 96-2140

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Please terminate all action in the preceding cases. They attempt to make the FCC the "Federal Zoning Commission" for cellular and broadcast towers and violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of Federalism.

Congress and the courts have long recognized that zoning is a matter of peculiarly local concern. The FCC has no zoning knowledge or expertise and is not accessible to most citizens.

For these reasons and others, Congress expressly preserved local zoning authority over cellular towers in the 1996 Act. Now the FCC is trying to get this jurisdiction back by issuing rules that improperly infringe on local zoning authority.

The FCC's efforts to assume jurisdiction over any local zoning matter where RF radiation is mentioned is unacceptable. The FCC ignores the fact that we cannot necessarily control the statements citizens make during meetings of our legislative bodies. Many municipalities, by state or local law, are required to allow citizens to speak on any topic they wish, even on items that are not on the agenda. This is part of what local government is all about.

Some of our citizens may be concerned about radiation from cellular towers. For the reasons just described we cannot necessarily prevent them from mentioning their concerns to us. The FCC's attempt to use this as a means to seize zoning authority and reverse local decisions violates basic principles of Federalism, Freedom of Speech and the rights of our citizens to petition their government.

This is particularly true if a municipality expressly says it is not considering such statements (that go beyond the radiation authority Congress left with municipalities) and the decision is completely valid on other grounds, such as the impact of the tower on property values or aesthetics.

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CITY OF IRVING

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For similar reasons the FCC cannot "second guess" the reasons for a municipality's decision. The FCC, like the courts, is bound by the stated reasons given by a municipality. Either these reasons are sufficient to uphold the decision or they are not. The FCC cannot "second guess" a municipality's true reasons any more than the courts can "second guess" the true reasons for the FCC's decisions.

The FCC's proposal to ban moratoria on cellular towers is objectionable for many of the reasons set forth above. It also fails to recognize that for some municipalities moratoria are a well-recognized zoning tool, particularly while they revise zoning ordinances. More importantly, Congress took away the FCC's authority over cellular tower zoning, and this includes moratoria.

Similarly, please terminate the FCC's proposed rulemaking preempting local zoning of broadcast towers. As you well know, broadcast towers can be over 2,000 feet high -- they are some of the tallest structures known to man. It is therefore astounding that you would propose that municipalities can't consider the impact of such towers on property values, the environment or aesthetics and that even safety considerations take second place. Safety always has to be the first priority.

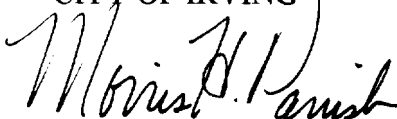
And setting artificial time limits for municipalities to act on environmental, zoning and building permit approvals for such towers serves no useful purpose. It is a violation of the U.S. Constitution, the Communications Act and Federalism for you to put time limits on municipalities to act on all local approvals and then state that all such applications will be automatically deemed granted if we don't act within this timeframe, even if the application is incomplete or violates state or local law.

The FCC should consider how it would react if it was told that any broadcast license application would be automatically deemed granted unless the FCC acted on it within 21 to 45 days; that this rule applied whether or not the application was complete; whether or not the applicant was foreign or domestically owned or otherwise qualified; or even whether the frequencies were available. And the rule would apply without regard to whether the tower for the station was at the end of an airport runway, in a wetland or in a historic district.

For these reasons the proposed actions all violate the Communications Act and the Constitution. Please terminate all these proceedings without taking the actions proposed therein.

Very truly yours,

CITY OF IRVING

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Morris H. Parrish", written over the printed name.

Morris Parrish
Mayor

/dj

cc: Mr. William F. Caton
Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission (6 copies)
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Washington, DC 20054

Cc: (see attached)

LIST OF COPIES

Commissioner Designate Harold Furchtgott-Roth
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Commissioner Designate Gloria Tristani
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Commissioner Susan Ness
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EX HANDED OR LATE FILED

November 19, 1997

MORRIS H. PARRISH
MAYOR

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Representative Dick Armey
301 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Armey:

We are writing you about the Federal Communications Commission and its attempts to preempt local zoning of cellular, radio and TV towers by making the FCC the "Federal Zoning Commission" for all cellular telephone and broadcast towers. Both Congress and the courts have long recognized that zoning is a peculiarly local function. Please immediately contact the FCC and tell it to stop these efforts which violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of Federalism.

In the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress expressly reaffirmed local zoning authority over cellular towers, thanks in great part to your effort. It told the FCC to stop all rulemakings where the FCC was attempting to become a Federal Zoning Commission for such towers. Despite this instruction from Congress, the FCC is now attempting to preempt local zoning authority in three different rulemakings.

Cellular Towers - Radiation: Congress expressly preserved local zoning authority over cellular towers in the 1996 Telecommunications Act with the sole exception that municipalities cannot regulate the radiation from cellular antennas if it is within limits set by the FCC. The FCC is attempting to have the "exception swallow the rule" by using the limited authority Congress gave it over cellular tower radiation to review and reverse any cellular zoning decision in the U.S. which it finds is "tainted" by radiation concerns, even if the decision is otherwise perfectly permissible. In fact, the FCC is saying that it can "second guess" what the true reasons for a municipality's decision are, need not be bound by the stated reasons given by a municipality and doesn't even need to wait until a local planning decision is final before the FCC acts.

Some of our citizens are concerned about the radiation from cellular towers. We cannot prevent them from mentioning their concerns in a public hearing. In its rulemaking the FCC is saying that if any citizen raises this issue that this is sufficient basis for a cellular zoning decision to immediately be taken over by the FCC and potentially reversed, even if the municipality expressly says it is not considering such statements and the decision is completely valid on other grounds, such as the impact of the tower on property value or aesthetics.

Cellular Towers - Moratoria: Relatedly the FCC is proposing a rule banning the moratoria that some municipalities impose on cellular towers while they revise their zoning ordinances to accommodate the increase in the numbers of these towers. Again, this violates the Constitution and the directive from Congress preventing the FCC from becoming a Federal Zoning Commission.

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Radio/TV Towers: The FCC's proposed rule on radio and TV towers is as bad: It sets an artificial limit of 21 to 45 days for municipalities to act on any local permit (environmental, building permit, zoning or other). Any permit request is automatically deemed granted if the municipality doesn't act in this timeframe, even if the application is incomplete or clearly violates local law. And the FCC's proposed rule would prevent municipalities from considering the impacts such towers have on property values, the environment or aesthetics. Even safety requirements could be overridden by the FCC! And all appeals of zoning and permit denials would go to the FCC, not to the local courts.

This proposal is astounding when broadcast towers are some of the tallest structures known to man -- over 2,000 feet tall, taller than the Empire State Building. The FCC claims these changes are needed to allow TV stations to switch to High Definition Television quickly. But *The Wall Street Journal* and trade magazines state there is no way the FCC and broadcasters will meet the current schedule anyway, so there is no need to violate the rights of municipalities and their residents just to meet an artificial deadline.

These actions represent a power grab by the FCC to become the Federal Zoning Commission for cellular towers and broadcast towers. They violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of Federalism. This is particularly true given that the FCC is a single purpose agency, with no zoning expertise, that never saw a tower it didn't like.

Please do three things to stop the FCC: First, write the new FCC Chairman William Kennard and FCC Commissioners Susan Ness, Harold Furchtgott-Roth, Michael Powell and Gloria Tristani telling them to stop this intrusion on local zoning authority in cases WT 97-197, MM Docket 97-182 and DA 96-2140; second, join in the "Dear Colleague Letter" currently being prepared to go to the FCC from many members of Congress; and third, oppose any effort by Congress to grant the FCC the power to act as a "Federal Zoning Commission" and preempt local zoning authority.

The following people at national municipal organizations are familiar with the FCC's proposed rules and municipalities' objections to them: Barrie Tabin at the National League of Cities, 202-626-3194; Eileen Huggard at the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, 703-506-3275; Robert Fogel at the National Association of Counties, 202-393-6226; Kevin McCarty at the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 202-293-7330; and Cheryl Maynard at the American Planning Association, 202-872-0611. Feel free to call them if you have questions.

Very truly yours,

CITY OF IRVING



Morris Parrish
Mayor

Cc: (see attached list)

COPY LIST

Senator John McCain
241 SROB
Washington, DC 20510-0303

Senator Conrad Burns
187 SDOB
Washington, DC 20510-2603

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
283 SROB
Washington, DC 20510-4304

Senator Slade Gorton
730 SHOB
Washington, DC 20510-4701

Senator Dianne Feinstein
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Representative Tim Bliley
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Representative W. J. Tauzin
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Representative Edward J. Markey
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Representative John D. Dingell
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Representative Bob Goodlatte
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Representative James Moran
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CITY OF IRVING

COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 11-20-97-692

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposes to make the FCC a "Federal Zoning Board" and:

- Violate principles of Federalism, where zoning is recognized as being a local concern on which the Federal government cannot and should not intrude.
- Violate the Federal telecommunications statutes which, with cellular towers in particular, preserve local zoning authority and prevent the FCC from becoming involved on zoning matters.
- Represent an unprecedented intrusion on local affairs where the FCC can "second guess" true motives for municipal decisions, even where a decision completely complies with applicable law.
- Violates the freedom of speech and right to petition government for municipalities and their residents, by threatening to penalize cities and residents that express concern over radiation from cellular antennas, even if they do so in ways specifically allowed by Congress and the Constitution.
- On broadcast towers, violate constitutional and other protections by allowing some of the tallest structures known to mankind (over 2,000 feet tall) to be built without any local approval and impose timing constraints which bear no relation to local zoning procedures or constitutional protections.
- Improperly prevent property values, aesthetics, or environmental concerns from being considered in zoning broadcast and TV towers and even specify that safety considerations are not paramount.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRVING, TEXAS:

SECTION I. THAT the City Council hereby urges the United States Congress and the Federal Communications Commission to oppose attempts to preempt local zoning of cellular, radio and television facilities and to oppose any national zoning for cellular and broadcast towers.

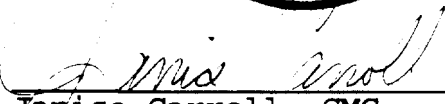
SECTION II. THAT the Mayor is authorized to execute the attached letters and transmit them to their respective addressees.

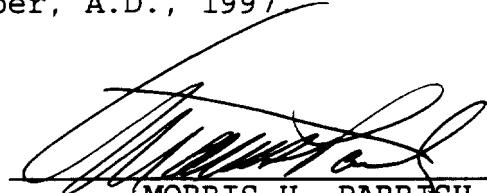
SECTION III. THAT this resolution shall take effect from and after its final date of passage, and it is accordingly so ordered.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRVING, TEXAS, this 20th day of November, A.D., 1997.

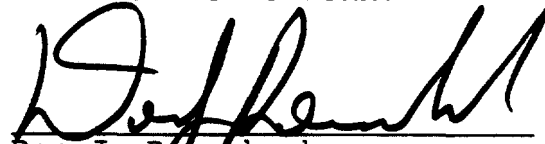


ATTEST:


Janice Carroll, CMC
City Secretary


MORRIS H. PARRISH
MAYOR

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Don J. Rorschach
City Attorney